

ODES AND OTHER POEMS
JOHN COWPER POWYS



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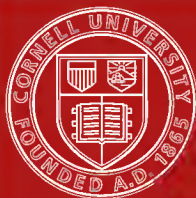
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BY
JOHN COWPER POWYS.



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TO THE GREAT GOD PAN.

O SOUL of mine, that fain wouldst strive for
ever,
Fruitless the toil and fond the passioning,
Thyself from thine own body thus to sever !
Vain strife to seek in dim imagining
The paradise that round thy feet doth lie—
Here is the field where thou must live or die,
Perish a slave or live a crownèd king.
Lo! it is naught this name Eternity !
The bloom and blight of life are Time's alone,
And Time, alas ! is all too quickly flown.

Ah, great god Pan, that pipst by reedy mere !
Goat-footed, but with music in thy soul
Whereat Apollo waxes pale to hear,
And the sad Earth leaps to thy song's control ;
Thine is the goodlier gift, the wiser way—
Do not all hidden lives of bird and beast,
All creeping things and things that soulless feed
On sunbeams, to thy heart their secrets say—
And thou art of them, sharest in their feast
And in their fast, knowest their inmost need.

The clay of ancient chaos clings to thee,
Its dumb appeal and inarticulate speech,
Moan of spent waves when all the world was
 sea,

Breaking forever on a boundless beach :
The burden of Earth's anguish clings to thee,
Lost winds that wander at their own wild will,
Dance of fast fading leaves in withered bowers,
Dank reeds that wail o'er many a moonlit rill,
The falling leaf by leaf of autumn's flowers.
Therefore to thee, great Pan, I dedicate
These first-fruits of my heart's new budded
 flower,

Its strivings, faint unfoldings mocked of fate,
Poor tears and laughter of a passing hour :
To thee who knowest well the strife of hearts—
Of hearts made dumb for very passion's sake,
That fain must mutter faintly of fair things,
Pine in dark places—bear uncrownèd parts
In Poesy's proud play—thou wilt not break
With loveless mockery my lute's frail strings.

Let flowers be wreathed, let smoke of sacrifice
Float heavenward from the altars of the fair
New gods, and let the word's loud praises rise
For saints whom earthly glories failed to snare.

Rather to thee, O great goat-footed Pan,
Shall rise my song, for aye thou takest thought
For creatures lower in life's scale than man,
And thy imperishable pipe hath brought
A revel of deep joy, a dream of mirth,
To the uncouth children of our ancient Earth.

True Beauty and fair Love suffice to bless
Man's life ; from these he plucks the deathless
fruit

Of ever-fresh unfading happiness.

But should his soul for one short hour be mute,
Pan's strange, sweet music creeps his senses thro',
And strikes within him those mysterious chords,
Earth-born and wild, but wondrous and most
sweet,

Wherewith stones, plants, and beasts their lives
renew—

Raptures and motions of the sense that Lords
Of Heaven find not with undefilèd feet—

So may I, O Goat-footed, learn of thee,
Whose heart, like Israfael's, is one sweet lute,
To shape a music manifold and free
'Mid star-proof shades and deserts darkly mute,
And e'en in Nature's dross and refuse see
The footprints of a veiled Divinity.

THE LAST DAY OF MARCH.

GOD ! how the old earth's heart leaps up,
And drinks its fill from Heaven's blue cup,
A vintage finer
Than all the nectar Hebe poured
In presence of Olympus' lord,
When Bacchus' grapes made red the board,
A draught diviner.

From their high caves the mountains shout,
And myriad insects poised about
Each budding flower
Sprinkle the wand'ring winds with song,
Like shafts of pearl the leaves among
Outdance the very sunbeam throng,
The rainbow shower.

How the great walls that fast embrace
This petty realm of time and space
Roll back together ;

At length life's secret lieth clear,
And every heart that worships here
Hath done with doubt, hath frighted fear,
Slipped its earth tether !

See, this least violet of the glade
Hath of a single sunbeam made
A palace royal ;
And takes with nods imperial
The music of the grasses tall,
The love sighs of the mosses small,
The zephyrs loyal.

Thro' latticed casements come the bees
With honey from the linden trees,
Grains of pure gold ;
And on their music-laden wings
Come memories of forgotten springs,
And childhood's fond imaginings
Our hearts enfold.

With feet invisible the grass
Is pressed, the happy breezes pass
At careless play,

As though the spring would ne'er be flown,
And summer roses ne'er be strown,
And daisied-fields for ever own
A deathless May.

Sweet Primrose faces pale between
Their cool and crumpled leaves of green,
Are kissed in turn
By dancing shades and sunbeams bright,
Until the starry eyes of night
Their amorous play, and Love's delight
With smiles discern.

Ecstatic tremblings in the air
Tell where the skylark bathes him there
In azure dew;
Deep peace doth fill the bowered wood,
For there the Dove doth ceaseless brood,
Building a shrine of solitude
For lovers true.

At fall of twilight's mystery
The shadows lengthen on the lea,
Like charmèd waves,

That move with softly dreaming motion,
Lulling to sleep the tired ocean
After the tempest's dread commotion
On the storm's grave

Now all the budding lanes about,
The blackbird with a golden shout
Hymns the slant sun ;
And birds and bees and butterflies
On drowsy wings, as swift it flies,
Pursue the sunlight from the skies,
For March is done.

ODE TO PROSERPINE.

O DAUGHTER of Demeter, yet once more
I touch my lute to hymn those virgin tears
Shed while the wailing of thy sweet compeers
Proclaimed thee borne to Pluto's sullen shore—
If thou hast aught left of thine ancient power,
Aught of that poppied spell that soothed away
The short-lived grief of Hellas' golden day,
O bless me too, child of this latter hour.

Faint through the oblivious mists of creeping time
Thy sweet face smiles upon us as of old,
And those Night-ravished locks of braided gold
Float o'er our vision like forgotten rhyme :
No more the great gods' footsteps make earth gay
With blossom'd flowers and fair Hesperian fruit;
Pale are the roses of this latter day,
The violets scentless, and the skylarks mute ;
But naught can break thy temples, naught decry
Thine altars ; Fate's inviolable decree
Hath made them surer than the unsounded sea,
Eternal as the everlasting sky.

Bitter to most thy poppies of sweet Death,
But my soul hungers for them ; yea, would fain
Taste and have done with pleasure and with pain ;
Forget the foolishness of mortal breath.
But hush ! What sweet winds so salute my brows,
Whisp'ring of beauteous sounds and golden sights
Of all the green and heavenly fresh delights
That Earth, thy mother, on her child bestows ?

Music of rain on primrose-scented meads,
Imperial daffodils that mock the wind,
And laugh rude-shaken from their slumbers blind
Beside the barren roots of moaning reeds,
Anemones foam-fair and fairy-frail,
Like gentle maidens won from dreamless sleep,
That blush to cast aside their Beauty's veil
And see the sunbeams thro' their curtains creep ;
And violets whose dim odours, like the voice
Of Loves forgotten, steal our senses through,
And carollings of larks that still rejoice,
As did the morning stars when Earth was new.

Scentless and mute ? Nay, tho' the gods are fled,
Tho' faded all the bloom of Enna's bowers,
Faded her beauteous fields, her breathing flowers,
The Spring is come again—thou art not dead—

So long as May is longed for thy sweet praise
Shall flourish : only to the Bride of Death
Life's inmost secret Fate interpreteth,
And grants the key to her mysterious ways.

TO THOMAS HARDY.

MASTER of human smiles and human moan,
Of strange soul-searchings, raptures,
agonies,
Passions that ask for bread and find a stone,
Hopes hungered into madness like the seas,
And Pity dumb with pleading like the wind :
Prophet art thou of that mysterious tongue
Wherewith our ancient Mother, deaf and blind,
Her griefs immortal and her joys hath sung
In the unheeding ears of human-kind.

O Master, thine a special meed of praise
From me whose heart is all thy sweet West's
own,
Hushed with the dew that dreams on orchard
sprays
With clover scents about the woodlands blown.
Full oft in those enchanted solitudes,
When fairy fingers ring the flowery bells,
And make a thousand mystic interludes
To the slow weaving of Hymettian spells,

Cool-couched on mossy bank I've floated down
The fair, swift currents of unnumbered dreams,
Plucked Amaranth blossoms by Elysian streams
And kissed the starry skirts of Dian's gown.

And there, in commune with thy mighty heart,
I saw how life's light wreath of summer roses
Remorseless Fate's inveterate frown discloses,
And sullen Death's intolerable dart :
Saw man's last hope beneath a soulless sky
To live for Love, and for Love's sake to die.

IN MEMORIAM.

IN rippling waves of silver green
The delvèd uplands shiver,
And fresh and fair her banks between
Frolics and laughs the river ;
Love-whispers, soft as infant's smiles,
Awake old Earth's repose,
And Ocean to his utmost isles
In answering rapture glows.

But where art thou whose laughter blent
With every wind that blew,
Whose eyes the very Heavens had lent
Their own mysterious hue ?
Alas ! by those sweet hands unblessed
The lilac now must bloom ;
And violets that thy lips caressed
Must now adorn thy tomb.

Ah ! vainly now the changing years
 Their varied glories show,
The heart whose fount is dried of tears
 No spring can make to flow ;
But could I weep with this sweet rain,
 Perchance with sunbeams, too,
My heart might learn to smile again
 Her old delight anew.

I cast no stone at Fate's decree ;
 Perchance this cloud behind
May shine a Morn I cannot see,
 A Star I cannot find—
I only know thy smile of yore
 Made Earth one golden dream,
A fairy isle, a fruitful shore
 Beside a heavenly stream.

I only know my life of yore
 Leapt like a lark at dawn,
But now it drags the desert o'er
 With trailing wings forlorn.
And yet I would not change my pain
 For all the world can give ;
A past with thee is greater gain,
 And in that past I live.

TO W. B. YEATS.

WREATHLESS of laurel plucked by Delian
springs

Art thou, sweet Druid of these latter days ;
Thou dost not build the temple of thy praise
On popular clamour or the gold of kings,
But Nature, thy own mother, Nature wild
And tameless as she was when woods were free
To elfin feet and fairy minstrelsy,
Crowns thee her twilight-haunted laureat child.
Waste shores where only wingèd moonbeams
dwell,

Dim groves where flowers feed on dews enchanted,
Sea caves where tressèd creatures twine their hair
These are the kingdoms of thy Keltic spell,
A snakeless Paradise by Poet planted,
Where thy own Rose reigns Queen of all the air.

TO XANTHE.

BETWEEN the darkening of the skies
And dew-fall on the jasmine spray,
To thee my tired spirit flies
This eve of May.

My soul on music's wings upborne
Calls back once more the vanished years,
Again return Love's purple morn,
Love's honeyed tears.

Days good and ill have since that time
Borne their inevitable fruit ;
Now while I string my random rhyme
Thy lips are mute.

And I must please the world with song,
Mock the unhearing Heaven with sighs
And meet my fellow human-throng
In gay disguise.

I may not touch those lips again,
Or from my inmost soul adore
Those wreathèd tresses' golden rain,
 Those eyelids' lore.

But no breeze stirs the jasmine flower,
No dew-drop wakes the dreaming rose,
But o'er my heart thy ancient power
 Resistless flows.

Though the world's tide betwixt us twain
Fierce on Time's echoing margin beat,
Dark Fate herself hath forged a chain
 To bind us, Sweet :

And at a whisper in my soul,
Heard on such golden eves as this,
Our sundered lives together roll,
 Our spirits kiss,

SONNET.

SWEET, do not doubt me, do not deem that I,
So many years touched of that soul of thine,
To see the world and all its works divine,
Could stoop to other women's witchery.
No! as the enthronèd Moon bears in her train
A silver-fringèd cloud that floats awhile,
Dowered with the light of her imperial smile,
But soon is mixed with outer shades again ;
So I a drooping eyelid may adore,
May praise the mystery of shaken tresses,
Or hold a hidden breast worth thrones of gold,
And then return to thee and ask no more,
But to forget all heaven in thy caresses,
And feel thine arms about my spirit fold.

TO APOLLO.

LUMINOUS master of song and sunbeams,
Lord of the lyre and golden bow,
Stoop from thy palace of light and save us,
Heal, Apollo, our mortal woe.
Life to thee was a blush of morning
Purpling proudly each pensive hill,
Life to thee was a revel of roses,
And all the honey their hearts distil.

Still there rise from our mortal darkness,
Moonlit clouds from a midnight gloom,
Prayers for a breath of thy larger ether ;
Break, Apollo, our earthly tomb !
Not one touch of our low lives' baseness,
Not one stain of our sordid strife,
Mars the peace of thy cloudless forehead,
Blurs the calm of thy conquering life.

Freedom of oceans, and freshness of flowers,
Glamour of sunbeams thy great heart sway,
Heats of flushed June, and sweet slumbers of
Autumn,
Blent with the lilt and the laughter of May.
Thine is the magic of Painter and Poet,
Thine are the secrets of prophet and mage,
Kingship alone, and the right to bestow it,
Glory of youth and the wisdom of age.

Born 'mid the smiles of the playtime of nations,
Born 'mid the shout of the world's glad youth,
Free is thy soul from the torment of seeking,
Veil behind veil for the temple of Truth ;
Pure art thou as the pearls of the rainbow,
Unashamed as the wind and the foam,
Spurring by day the bright steeds of the morning,
Sleeping by night in thy bastion'd home.

Deep we grovel in godless passion,
Cling with our souls to the world's dull
clay,
Clothe us in creeds and the folly of fashion,
Heed not the rising or setting of day.
Only for gold of an effortless Heaven
Leave we our lusts, and relinquish our gains,

Base in desire, and base in repression,
Cleave to our pleasures and shrink from our
pains ;
Grant us a dower, O Delian Apollo,
Dole us a boon of thy love and thy hate ;
Give us to strike at the Python of priesthoods,
Give us to vanquish the furies of Fate.

Ah, but one gift and the best thou art lacking,
Luminous Master of sunbeams and song,
Godlike Anger is great, but greater
Godlike Pity for human wrong.
Not at thy throne, in its sorrow and anguish,
Not at thy throne, in its weakness and sin,
Kneeleth the world, but at His who has bidden
Harlots and publicans enter in.

TO NORA.

THE mystery of midnight's adorning,
The hush and sweet slumber of noon,
The song on the lips of the morning,
The magical evenings of June,
Sublimed to one planet of splendour,
Dissolved to one pearl of delight,
Is all that my rhyming can render
Of Nora aright.

A passion that pines for a season,
A worship that kneels for an hour,
A trust with the torment of treason,
A hope that must fade like a flower,
Fine-forged as the shafts of the thunder,
Deep-wrought as a storm on the sea,
Are symbols and signs of the wonder
My soul hath for thee.

Thy birth was as budding of roses,
Thy childhood as ripening of vines,
Thy heart is as sunlight on snows is,
Thy tresses the morning entwines.
No cloud in the sunset's declining
But pales at the glow on thy lips,
Lo ! the moon is bedimmed in her shining—
Thy girdle unslips.

The anguish of passions that perish
Unspoken, the pity of pains
That pine for the morrow, and cherish
The past with its ruinous gains,
Are my portion and part in life's story ;
But to Nora, as well it beseems,
The Gods give a palace of glory,
A kingdom of dreams.

TO JOHN KEATS.

I WEPT the fading of the Olympian dawn,
Shapes so divine turned to an empty name,
Until to ease my fond lamenting came
Thy flowery car on summer winds upborne,
Immortal Bard, whose magic wand sublime,
Raised up a Heaven of Gods from out the tomb,
And whose luxuriant and most lavish rhyme
Shook from Olympus all his gathered gloom.
Long time in vain did Nature fill her groves
With budded thoughts and leafy whispers sweet,
Till thou didst tread with incense-hallowed feet
Her inmost shrine, and gav'st her all thy loves :
Therefore to thee doth thankful Nature teach
The magic of her own peculiar speech.

SPRING.

A THOUSAND skylarks o'er the fields
Like wine their anthems pour ;
Blithe March with buxom blushes yields
To April's arms once more.
From budding woods and wakening streams
Come whispers soft and low
As those that steeped the Latmian's dreams
When Dian lost her bow.

Once more Adonis wakes to blush
For shame of Cyprian kisses—
Once more great Pan outpipes the thrush
And Echo's laughter misses.
A thousand poets in her train
From Pluto's dark dominions,
Comes our Persephone again
With flower-embroidered pinions.

First, silver Avon feels once more
The magic of his songs
Who sounded Hell, who trod the floor
That to high God belongs.
And last with ling'ring footsteps slow
Where Devon maidens stray
And Devon's fairest cowslips blow,
Blithe Herrick tunes his lay.

"While Julia's locks are nut-brown yet,
While May is fain to borrow
Her lips for roses, why regret
Death's nearness or life's sorrow?
Be merry while the daisies dance
With sunbeams, while the Dove
Doth teach the woods to conquer chance
With immemorial Love."

O gracious Myth of Proserpine,
Fresh born with budded flowers!
O dim imaginings divine
Of mystic Easter hours!
O human hearts that toil and weep
Hope all and nothing fear!
Soon comes the end with dreamless sleep
Or Morning new and clear.

SONG.

I BLAME thee not, beloved ; turn and smile,
Turn to the glitt'ring world and smile again.
The deepest seas with foam their depths beguile ;
Heed not my pain.

Trust me, dear love ; fear not that I should dare
My heart's hid thought to the broad sky disclose,
Or to great God my tortured soul lay bare
The thing it knows.

Sate thee with smiles—go, tread the trouble down
In jewelled dance and parodies of song ;
I do not grudge thee pleasure's rosiest crown,
'Tis not for long.

It matters not—the strife of chance may twist
Immortal purpose from its high design ;
But by all Heaven, the lips my soul hath kissed
Henceforth are mine.

TO CHARLES LAMB.

NOT thine to tread the midmost marl of hell,
Not thine to pluck the unfading fruits of
Heaven ;

Not unto thee the immortal Muse has given
To people flowery isles with twilight spell.
But here, where toiling men have lived and loved
For immemorial ages ; here, where rolls
The confluent commerce of the opposing poles,
Thy Muse holds court and revel unproved.
Other and greater bards brought Heaven to Earth,
But thou didst raise this homely Earth of ours,
Thy Mother still for all her haggard eyes,
To seat her at God's feet—tear-wistful Mirth,
Sweet Love, and Fancy's freshest morning flowers,
These were thy gift, and these outlast the skies.

SONG.

IN vain the bright sun seeks a flower,
That once the grave hath known,
In vain would man recall an hour
The Past hath made her own ;
But more in vain would mortals blend
Two lives without a bar—
There is more space 'twixt friend and friend
Than between star and star.

For each must bear within his eyes
A secret solved by none—
As midnight's stars fulfil the skies
Tho' hidden by the sun,
So deep beneath our converse vain
Dwelleth the human soul,
Nor may earth's wisest sage attain
To read her mystic scroll.

Ah, God ! I ask no Heaven of gold
In other worlds of light,
I only ask Thee to behold
One human heart aright ;
For Heaven. indeed 'twould be, if I
Could read that soul divine
From whose sweet face so wondrously
God's inmost secrets shine.

SONG OF THE NORTH WIND.

ANGUISH of rain in my bosom, and wailing
of hamlets behind me;
Scatt'ring of stormclouds above, breaking of
forests beneath ;
Hard in my talons the bridle of oceans, the har-
ness of thunder,
Planets bedimmed with my breath, eagles
entailed in my hair ;
Lo ! how the mountains wax grey at my coming
and shriek from their caverns,
Shadow their footsteps with mist, cover their
foreheads with clouds ;
Lo ! how the locks of the sunset are hurled to
their grave in confusion,
Flushed as the roses of June, shed like the
lilacs of May ;
Lo ! how in desolate places, from caverns and
cataracts calling,
Demons and ghouls of the earth plead to par-
take of my joy.

Fanned by my breath cometh rumour of battle,
and madness of peoples,
Hearts that are heavy with hate, hands that
are clenched for a crime ;
Baffled and brimmed by my fury, earth's rivers
are reeds to be riven ;
Pillaged and pierced by my wrath, cornfields
are chaff to be strewn ;
Silvery pulsings of Morn, purpureal ardours of
Evening
Pale at my presence and die, fade at the beat
of my wings ;
Musical murmurs of pine trees, and whispered
bewailings of willows
Change at my coming to groans, wild and
demoniac cries :
Nay but they love me the Bards, who are brave
in the brunt of life's battle,
Poets that pipe not of peace, prophets that
swerve not for swords ;
High on my wings shall they ride over city and
desert and ocean,
Sowing the whirlwind of Truth, reaping the
wrath of the Gods !

TO A. C. SWINBURNE.

NO more the fair foam flowers that bless
 The furrows of the sea,
Like rosebuds white her locks caress,
 Like pearls adorn her knee.
The snow-pure pinions of her doves
 Are trailed in dust and rain,
And never shall the Paphian groves
 Laugh to her songs again.

The Ocean-born, the Beautiful,
 We serve her now no more,
Earth waxes dull and dutiful
 To old men's withered lore.
Not now a single tress of hair
 Is worth a Heaven's loss,
For Aphrodite's kingdom fair
 Is conquered by the Cross.

But here, where rolls the ceaseless stir
Of the new worlds at strife,
One poet's heart still turns to her,
Love's mother and man's Life.
In words as fierce as love's own fire,
As sweet as love's own breath,
Thou singest still the world's desire
More dear than life or death.

Like tressèd star thy peerless song
Cleaves the dull leaden air ;
No clouds withstand thy pinions strong,
No towers thine arrows spare.
But ocean-fresh and thunder-free,
Blind love thy only law,
Thou tamest Beauty as the Sea
Doth tame the trembling shore.

SONG.

SWEET Pain, that so long followed me,
Where is it thou art fled ?
This strange new Joy affrighteth me,
I'd have thee back instead !

My heart is dizzy, faint with pleasure,
Perplexed and vexed with smiles.
Where art thou now, my buried treasure ?
Sweet Pain, where lurk thy wiles ?

I love not so to leave a friend,
And long we've dwelt together.
Come hand in hand then till the end
Thro' storm and sunshine weather !

And yet, I trust when Death's dark wave
With foam our feet bedew,
And holy saints my spirit save,
They will not save thine too !

SONG.

I CANNOT tell what strange mysterious
 grace
 Dwells in those downcast eyes, that shadowy
 hair
So sweetly floating o'er thine angel face ;
 I only know that Love must harbour there.

I cannot tell what secrets soft and low
 Those dear lips whisper in the twilight's ear,
Unheard of fields and flowers ; I only know
 Spirits invisible are hushed to hear.

Ah Love ! I know not whence that form so fair
 Stealeth the magic of its lissom pell ;
But Earth hath never felt a charm so rare
 Since the first flake of snow in Eden fell.

I know not how that maiden soul of thine
 Steeps all the ambient air in heavenly Peace ;
But, like a largess of Lethean wine,
 To my world-wearied heart it brings release.

I cannot tell why all my life must be
Lavished like incense at thine angel fane ;
But stars heed not the passion of the sea—
I must love on, and ask not love again.

THE TRUE POET.

POETS have wronged thee, Nature ; many
praise

Thee for thy beauty, tread thy secret ways
By rushing brook and gently murmuring stream,
Where marigolds on their own glory dream,
And dewy Morn holds tremulously up
To lips of hidden flowers her golden cup.
The wind that plays all night with rosebuds fair
And all the noon dreams in the slumbering air ;
The forest glades, with music filled for ever
Of birds and bees, and many a whispering river,
Whose coolness seems a very fount from Heaven
To purge the world-stuffed soul of earthly leaven ;
The brooding majesty of hills that wait,
Like armoured sentinel in sullen state,
The footsteps of the storm, the enamoured shore
That takes the ocean's kisses—these, and more,
Make one fair world of passions, raptures, joy,
Wherein such Bards their trembling hearts
employ

In ever-breathing ecstasy of praise,
While the world crowns them with eternal bays.

But not of these, O Nature, not of these
Is thy true glory. He whose soul would please
With living sacrifice thy yearning heart
Must love thee as a Mother, bear his part
In thy deep travail throes and grievous pain,
Doubt not when Night is on thee, nor refrain
His music tho' thy Beauty waxes dim
And thine immortal eyes are turned from him.
Too oft the Bards of that celestial throng,
Whose very names are organ-notes among
The stars of Heaven, and whose unfading rhyme
Bears deathless blossoms 'mid the deeps of time,
Shrank, even they, from Nature's wild embrace,
Paled at the pain on their great Mother's face,
Built themselves idols of the inconstant air,
To mists that vanish raised immortal prayer,
And in vain strife to touch the abysmal God
Bruised many a flower that made divine the sod.

But the true poet is the Bard that clings
To Nature, and about her fair neck flings
The garlands of his fancy, treasures long
Her heart's dumb motions, snatches of faint song,

And blind unfoldings of sweet things to be,
Until, like moonlight mixing with the Sea,
His music turns her travail into glory,
And to her own ears tells her own heart's story.
Nor doth the true Bard hold himself aloof
From his own kind, shuns not the common roof,
The common burden of life's toil and tears;
But ever from the Past's deep-buried years,
From the veiled Future's starry questionings,
From his own heart's most secret communings,
And unseen Heaven's transcendant ether clear,
Spreads around all a golden atmosphere,
Fragrant and spanned with rainbows. Nor shall
he
Who cleaves to Nature pine in misery;
For her true son the Mother ne'er forsakes,
But gently on her knees his spirit takes,
Smooths his worn brow, and smiles away his
woe,
Leads him where Beauty's Fount doth ceaseless
flow ;
For him she puts away her mask of age,
The dust and stains of her long pilgrimage,
And to the soul that loved and sought her
Truth
Unveils a countenance of deathless youth.

TO L. T. N.

AH! happy winds whose wings caress
The form I may not see ;
Ah ! happy flowers whose petals press
The lips withheld from me ;
Ah ! happy stones that bear the dint
Of footsteps so divine ;
On your cold hearts they leave no print,
But they have broken mine.

Ah ! my lost Love, grieve not—and yet
Sometimes when twilight falls,
And draws the curtain of regret
O'er dusking chamber walls,
Breathe but one prayer for him whose heart
Lies buried 'neath thy feet,
Who fain must bear life's load apart
For thine and Love's sake, Sweet.

SONG.

O H Love, when first I felt thy chain,
Of roses it was wrought ;
But now each link is forged of pain,
Of iron each is fraught.

Yea, bitter is the frost, that slays
Sweet flowers too early blown ;
Yea, deep the anguish of the days
When winged Faith hath flown.

But sadder far than Faith decayed,
Sharper than bitt'rest frost,
The price of pain my heart hath paid
For Love,—now Love is lost.

When first I clasped thee to my breast,
The very stars stood still ;
The angels of the spheres had rest
To hear thee speak thy will.

But now the worlds roll on, and I
Am left alone to weep—
The Heavens give laugh for laugh ; we cry—
They turn again to sleep.

TO SLEEP.

MOTHER of winged loves, more heavenly
 dear

Than forest bower to sunbeam-wearied eyes,
O free my spirit from its thin disguise
Of day's light laughter and soul-with'ring fear ;
O thou whose angel-armoured might unbars
The portals of God's treasure-house of dreams
Where mystic gardens shadow fairy streams,
And shoreless seas are wooed by voiceless stars,
Build up for me a palace hushed as night,
But haunted by the breath of dreaming flowers,
And roofed with secret music of the spheres,
And then, O angel Sleep, crown my delight
With the rose garland of love's golden hours,
And the pearl-coronet of love's sweet tears.

DEATH.

WE toil and take our rest — we laugh and
weep,

Pine in our loves, and perish in our hates—

A little while we live, and then the Fates

Cover us gently with eternal sleep.

Ah, better so ! Did kindly Death not keep

Open his sacred immemorial gates,

Bowed with the grief that wears, the joy that
sates,

We men might ever in the low dust creep

Thro' life's dim paths unblessed by any star ;

But at the touch of Death's celestial wings

Our loves loom larger and our hates wax faint,

For in Death's hand those deathless Mysteries are

That round our life with hints of heavenlier
things,

Dreams of strange regions, passing mortal taint.

TO MONTACUTE.

O THOU at Memory's holiest shrine caressed
Sweet-wooded Citadel of loves that grow
Like hidden violets hushed at Nature's breast,
Of hopes that like enchanted rivers flow
Beyond the seas, beyond the utmost star,
Where foamless islands of Elysium are.

No greener fields, no fairer-gabled street
Have e'er the roseate hues of evening worn,
Or heard the skylark's carol silver-sweet
Kiss both the dewy cheeks of blushing morn,
A paradise of pleasures still secure
From the world's voice profane and touch
impure.

Here undisturbed may dusky Dryads dream
That Pan with all his music haunteth still
The beechen hollow and the reedy rill,
That Orpheus seated by each murmuring
stream

Harps till fair Hyacinths forget to weep
And Daffodils dance-weary sink to sleep.

Here birds may build, bees toil and flowers unfold,
Troubled by naught but gently whisp'ring
wind,

Altars inviolate here the Dove may find
In consecrated shade of pine-trees old ;
And he who walks by moonlight oft may see
The fairies at their mazy minstrelsy.

O childhood, whose soft eyes and rippling hair,
Whose tender, pleading tones and looks divine
Unravel all the woof of life's despair,
And flood our midnight with the morning's wine,
A dearer charm hast thou, a sweeter tongue,
Than any song that poet ever sung.

Old shadows haunt thy paths, old memories dear.
There rose the towers of castled Camelot,
And here the golden curls of Guinevere,
Mix with the dust of him she once forgot.
Here white-stoled nuns froze their sweet blood
with prayer,
And only knew in dreams that Spring was fair.

So evermore between a sleep and sleep
We mortals toil, and know not our own souls,
And still beneath our feet life's ocean rolls.
Above God's stars their patient watches keep :
We pray—but lo ! the largeness of High Heaven
Is to the heart that loves already given.

TO R. M. C. H.

I KNOW not what on veilèd knees
For thee the high gods keep,
Who rock like foam upon the seas
The cradle of our sleep ;
But twined within thy tresses gold
The threads of Fate I feel,
And in thy maiden eyes behold
The gleam of Fortune's wheel.

Ah ! lady, ere thy youth be fled,
Thy rose of Beauty blown,
Bind close its leaves about thy head,
Make all its pearls thine own.
Let Age be wise, let Summer bring
Her load of toil and sleep ;
Let Autumn hoard her harvesting,
Her ripened vintage reap.

Be happy ! Fain would I behold
Thy maiden spirit bear
A flower more beauteous than the gold
That mingles with thy hair.
But, ah ! it is thyself that art
Life's most consummate flower,
The morning's dewdrops in thy heart,
Its sunbeams for thy dower !

SONG.

WITHIN my heart a flower lies dead,
That once with honey-dew was fed
And softest rain ;
But ah ! its leaves so lightly shed
Will not lie still in their quiet bed,
But flutter, as tho' in pain.

A broken lute on my heart is laid,
Strung long ago with an angel's hair,
And woven with moonbeams passing fair ;
But ah ! the music that it made
Hath changed at last to a grievous sigh,
That echoes and echoes on, and will not die.

A dream within my heart lies dead ;
Ah, silver feet ! ah, sunny hair !
That o'er dim seas my soul hath piloted
To mystic islands fair ;

But now my dream hath melted away,
Like a wave that breaks on a desolate shore,
And I see the ghost of it, night and day,
For evermore.

TO WILLIAM COWPER.

NEVER hath gentler soul or purer heart
Waked the sweet echoes of Parnassian
strings.

Let other bards with deeper passionings,
With loftier flights and more mellifluous art
Compel our praises.—Thou dost ask our loves
As thou gav'st thine to birds and beasts and
flowers,

Where thy slow Ouse dreaming of summer
hours

Glides to the chanting of innumerable doves.
O tender heart, that seemed so long the toy
Of adverse Fate and Heaven most pitiless,
Taking thy pleasure in Elysian joy,
Knowest thou now no wrong without redress ?
O God, for Thine own sake give larger mind
To Thy meek sons, or make Thy sages kind.

TO M. A.

AH! Lady, deem not cold my lute
 Beneath thy Beauty's flame,
Deem not these trembling lips are mute
 To celebrate thy name.
Come nearer, Sweet, and thou wilt see
 It was my heart that long
Had beat so loud for love of thee,
 Thou could'st not hear my song!

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